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Counting Matters: Baltimore Homeless Point-in-Time Census Report

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University



A Report Submitted to the Baltimore Homeless Services
City of Baltimore

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Note: The views and opinions expressed in this report do not necessarily state or reflect those of Morgan State University or Baltimore Homeless Services, Inc.

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We are especially grateful to ALL the volunteers who walked the streets of downtown Baltimore and managed the census command center on the cold morning of January 22, 2009. We appreciate your commitment!

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I. Executive Summary

On January 22, 2009, the Baltimore Homeless Services, Inc. and the School of Architecture and Planning at Morgan State University conducted a point-in-time census count of homeless individuals in Baltimore City. The project meets the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development mandate to provide data on homelessness.

Various methodologies were employed to capture a close to accurate number of homeless individuals in the City of Baltimore. The sheltered count is based on the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) intake, as well as reported data provided by shelters not included in the HMIS system. The unsheltered count is a combination of a street count on January 22, 2009 from 1:00 a.m. to 6:00 a.m. and surveys of homeless individuals receiving services from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. from various agencies.

On January 22, 2009, the City of Baltimore yielded a count of 3,419 homeless individuals, a 12% increase from the 2007 Census. Majority of these individuals were single, African-American, and male. Of the sheltered homeless population, 41% were females and 508 (30.5%) of them had children with them while in the shelters. A significant 31% of the sheltered population were chronically homeless with substance abuse and mental health issues.

Majority of the unsheltered individuals were males. A significant 47% were between the ages of 45 and 60 years old. Among some of the places they inhabited were public spaces, outside certain buildings, bus/train station, and hospital emergency rooms. A thorough site assessment of about 94 homeless territories reveal that location choices are based on heat sources in the winter, privacy, safety, and protection from climactic elements.

The other findings contained in this report provide a better understanding of homelessness trends in the city of Baltimore.

II. Introduction

A census count of homeless individuals is not only conducted to understand this subpopulation better while raising public awareness, but, more importantly, is essential to planning for strategic responses to homelessness. The United States Code Title 42, Chapter 119, Subchapter I, defines “homeless” or “homeless individual or homeless person” as:

1. an individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; and
2. an individual who has a primary night-time residence that is —
 - A. A supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill);
 - B. An institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized; or
 - C. A public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.¹

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) uses this general definition to provide a framework for local governments in their efforts to address homelessness. For those funded by HUD, these municipalities are required to engage in a process that produces a close to accurate count of the number of homeless individuals in their respective jurisdiction. Although various methodological approaches have been debated throughout the years, local governments use the numbers to guide the strategic planning of homeless programs and services.

¹ Available on <http://www.hud.gov/homeless/definition.cfm>. Accessed on 4/05/09.

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This study report is prepared for the City of Baltimore to accomplish the following:

1. To provide an estimate number of individuals who were homeless on January 22, 2009 from 12:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.;²
2. To describe these homeless individuals in terms of demographic characteristics, health conditions, income levels, and homelessness history;
3. To compare current statistics with results documented in previous census reports (2003, 2005, 2007);
4. To describe and assess urban spaces associated with the unsheltered homeless; and
5. To assess the census methodology and provide recommendations for improving the count process.

² HUD requires that local municipalities funded by the Continuum of Care program under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act must conduct a biennial homeless census in late January.

III. Methodology

To obtain data on the number of homeless individuals in Baltimore City on January 22, 2009, the Baltimore Homeless Services, Inc., partnered with the Morgan State University School of Architecture and Planning to conduct the 2009 Homeless Census. A six component approach was used to identify the sheltered and unsheltered homeless population. With assistance from a team of service providers, outreach workers, and the Baltimore Homeless Services staff, these components provided significant data on the number of homeless individuals and their characteristics.

A. Sheltered Count

A.1 HMIS count: The primary source of data for people housed in shelters during the census date (January 22, 2009) is a Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), a comprehensive data system designed to collect information about homeless individuals and families. The HMIS count was derived from data extracted from the Regional Online Service Information Exchange (R.O.S.I.E.) database, which included clients who stayed in emergency/overnight shelters and transitional housing. Appendix A lists the service agencies included in the HMIS data base.

A.2 Non-HMIS count: The non-HMIS data was collected by contacting various homeless service agencies not covered in the HMIS system. Each organization reported the number of individuals who stayed in their facility on the night of January 21, 2009. Appendix B lists the service organizations that reported their data to the Baltimore Homeless Services Office.

B. Unsheltered Count

B.1 Street Count: On January 22, 2009, from 12:00 a.m. to 6:00 a.m., with temperatures averaging 16 degrees Fahrenheit, a group of about 75 volunteers were assigned to walk the streets of downtown Baltimore to count the homeless who were sleeping in outdoor places not appropriate for habitation (i.e., sidewalks, park benches, building steps, etc...). The boundaries for the street count were the following:

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North: North Avenue

East: Greenmount Avenue, Madison Street, Fallsway Road

South: Pratt Street

West: Martin Luther King Boulevard, Howard Street

Two nodes were included in the street count as suggested by outreach workers who were aware of concentrations of homeless individuals. The first node was a nine block area bounded by Lombard Street (northern end), Ann Street (eastern end), Bank Street (southern end), and Bethel Street (western end). Another node was an encampment on the Gwynns Falls South Trail (south of the M&T Stadium). Please see Map 1 below for the study boundaries and nodes.

B.2 Survey of the Unsheltered (Conducted from 12:00 a.m. to 6:00 a.m.): As volunteers walked the streets, they also conducted personal surveys with unsheltered individuals who were awake and willing to answer questions. The survey was designed to gather information about their housing and health situations, as well as their preferred places to sleep. Twenty six individuals were interviewed and completed the surveys.

B.3 Survey of Unsheltered (Conducted in drop-in centers from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.): The Baltimore Homeless Services staff and a few volunteers were assigned to conduct the survey at drop-in centers, which included the following agencies: Catholic Charities - My Sister's Place, Catholic Charities - Our Daily Bread, Baltimore City Department of Social Services –Homeless Emergency & Environmental services Unit, Beans & Bread Drop-in, Health Care for the Homeless, Helping Other People Empowerment (HOPE) Drop-in, Manna Drop-in/Meal Program, University of Maryland Medical - Emergency Room, and You are Never Alone House (YANA.)

To validate that the respondents were unsheltered, three qualifying questions were asked:

1. Did you stay in a homeless shelter last night (evening of January 21st to the morning of January 22nd)?
2. Have you already been interviewed by someone today from the Census Project?

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3. Do you currently have a place to stay?

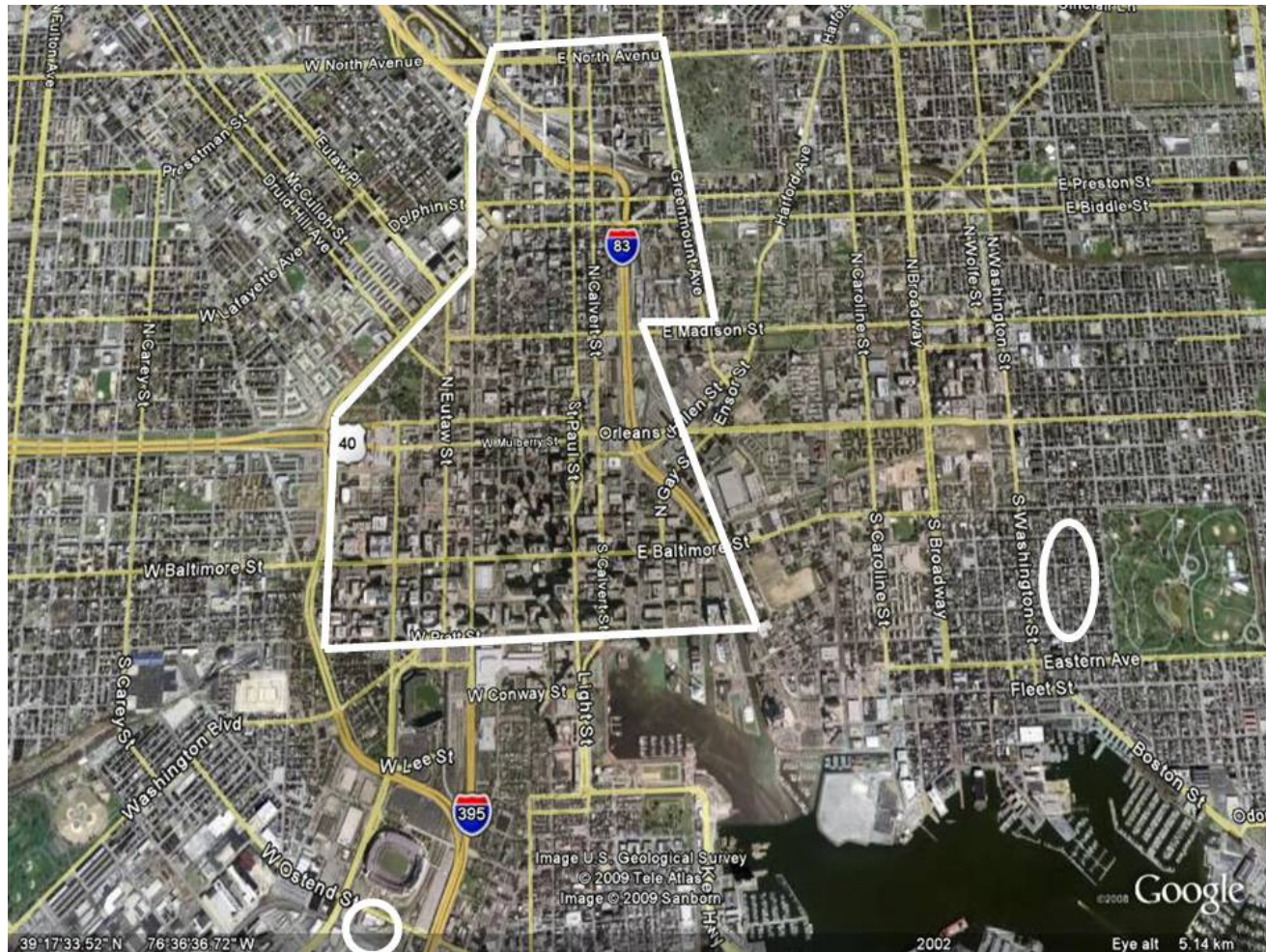
Individuals who responded with “No” answers were then invited to participate in the survey. A total of 197 surveys were completed, including the 26 street surveys conducted from 12:00 – 6:00 a.m.

C. Drop-in Center Counts

Organizations that offer services to the homeless population were asked to provide data about their clients on January 22, 2009. The question asked was, “How many of your clients are homeless?” These numbers were calculated into an “Uncertain” category. No pre-assessments were undertaken to verify whether they were sheltered on the evening of January 21st to early morning of January 22nd. However, based on staff assessment of clients, at least 40% of them were unsheltered.

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Map 1 Project Boundaries for the Homeless Census Project
(Street Count on January 22, 2009)



IV. Census Results

A. Overall Census Counts

On January 22, 2009, the City of Baltimore counted 3,419 homeless individuals. Of these individuals, 66% were lodged in various homeless shelters throughout the city and 9% spent the night in “uninhabitable” places. The rest of the homeless (25%), categorized as “uncertain”, were likely to be unsheltered as determined by service providers (i.e., soup kitchen workers and counseling and health workers) who interact with them on a regular basis. Table 1 presents the distribution for each of the categories used in the census counts. Please refer back to the Methodology section for descriptions of these categories.

Table 1 Homeless Census Counts for the City of Baltimore (January 22, 2009)				
	Sheltered Individuals	Unsheltered Individuals	Uncertain	Total
HMIS count	1664			
Non-HMIS count	601			
Drop in/Day Resource Centers		197 surveyed 337 counted*	505 counted	
Street Count (1:00am to 7:00a.m)		26 surveyed 89 counted		
Total	2265	649	505	3419

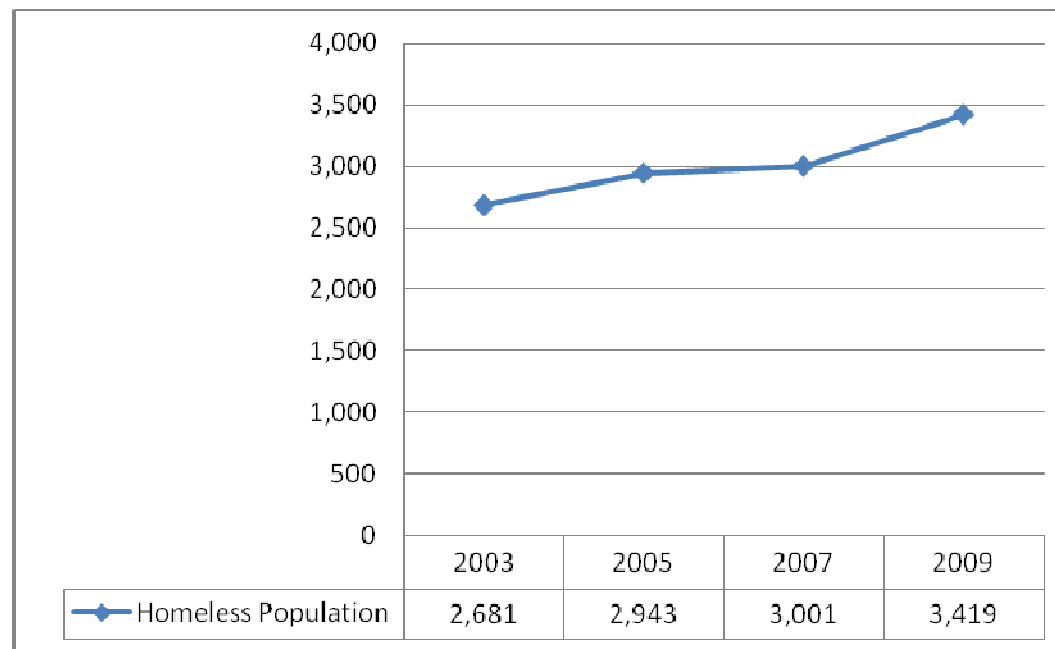
* Based on service providers' knowledge, it is estimated that 40% of the individuals counted but not surveyed were unsheltered.

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The number of homeless individuals has increased since the initial count in 2003, although a few researchers would argue that the increase is a result of more accurate counting procedures. Based on observations by service providers who interact regularly with the homeless, they constantly encounter new groups of homeless individuals and families. Figure 1 reveals a growth in the Baltimore homeless population.

From 2005 to 2009, changes in the number of sheltered and unsheltered groups are evident (Table 2). Unfortunately, the significant increase in the “uncertain” status of homeless individuals clearly indicates the complexity of tracking this population.

Figure 1 Homeless Trends in Baltimore City (2003-2009)



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Table 2 Comparison of Homeless Census (2005, 2007, 2009)			
	2005	2007	2009
Sheltered	2,701	2,236	2,265
Unsheltered	82	629*	649
Homeless but uncertain of status	160	136	505
Total	2,943	3,001	3,419

Note: The *homeless but uncertain of status* category refers to individuals who were counted in drop-in centers, soup kitchens, and the 2005 street count.

* This number was based on the count reported in the 2007 Continuum of Care Point-In-Time proposal to HUD.

In addition to the 2009 Point-in-Time Homeless Census count in Baltimore City, the Center for Adolescent Health (CAH) at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and the Baltimore Homeless Youth Initiative (BHYI) conducted a parallel count of homeless and unstably housed youth and young adults between the ages of 14-24 on January 23, 2009. The youth count differed from the point-in-time census count in that the youth definition of homelessness is broader than HUD's mandated definition. The homeless youth census includes a count of young people who were in state foster care or juvenile justice custody but have left the system without placement, young people living on the street, in shelters and in transitional housing. Also included are "unstably-housed youth" who are couch-surfing -- staying temporarily with friends, extended kin networks, or lovers.

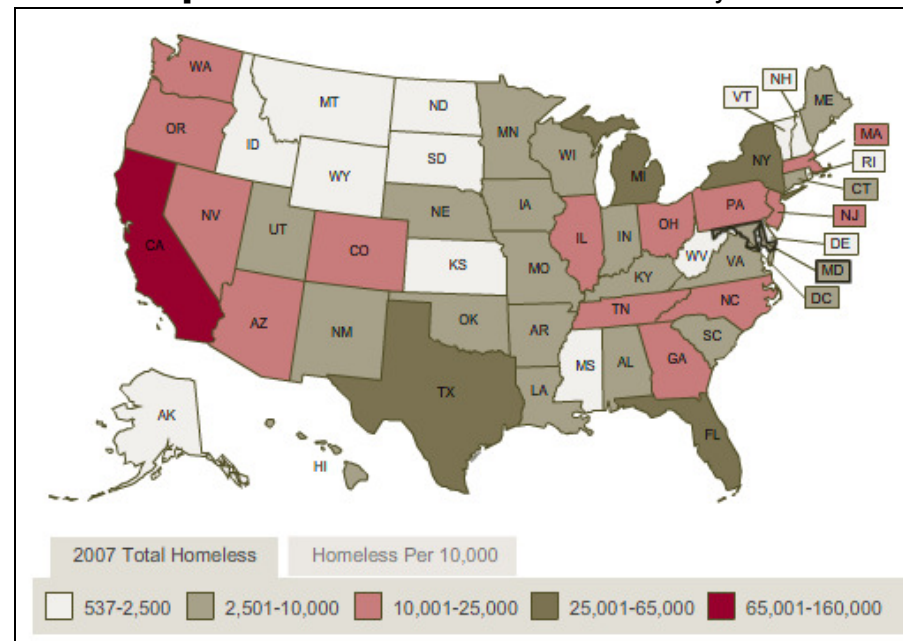
The methodology used was contacting seven community agencies or organizations that targeted this subpopulation. These organizations identified 781 young people (ages 10-24) in Baltimore city who were homeless or unstably housed. Of these, 426 were definitely unaccompanied by parents or guardians. The data from the Baltimore City Public Schools did not distinguish between young people who are accompanied and those who are not; undoubtedly some percentage of these young people was also unaccompanied. The majority of youth in the parallel survey were 15-18 years old (55%). Just over 60% of the young people were male. The overwhelming majority were unstably housed. Half of the young

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people were identified as systems youth. These numbers are not included in the Baltimore census count of 3,419 because of possible duplication.

In 2007, the state of Maryland had approximately 9,626 homeless persons.³ This figure contributes about 1.4% to the national homeless persons count of 671, 859. The map below shows that Maryland had a relatively moderate incidence of homelessness compared to other states (Map 2).

Map 2 2007 Homelessness Counts by State



Source: National Alliance to End Homelessness

³ National Alliance To End Homelessness. Available on <http://www.endhomelessness.org/section/data/homelessmap>.

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However, when these figures are used in context (i.e., state population), Maryland had a relatively moderate homeless population rate. For example, Table 3 shows that Maryland had 17 homeless persons per 10,000 population compared to Pennsylvania (13 homeless persons per 10,000 population) or New York (32 homeless persons per 10,000 population). In contrast, the District of Columbia had an extremely high incidence of homelessness (90 homeless persons per 10,000 population).

Table 3 2007 Rate of Homelessness by Selected States	
	Homeless Persons Per 10,000 Population
United States	22
Maryland	17
District of Columbia	90
Delaware	12
New Jersey	20
New York	32
Pennsylvania	13

Source: National Alliance to End Homelessness

B. Demographic Characteristics of Sheltered Homeless Individuals (HMIS Data)

The HMIS database provided basic information about homeless individuals who were sheltered on January 21, 2009. A total of 1,664 individuals stayed in emergency/overnight shelters and transitional housing. The demographic characteristics of this homeless subset are found in Table 4.

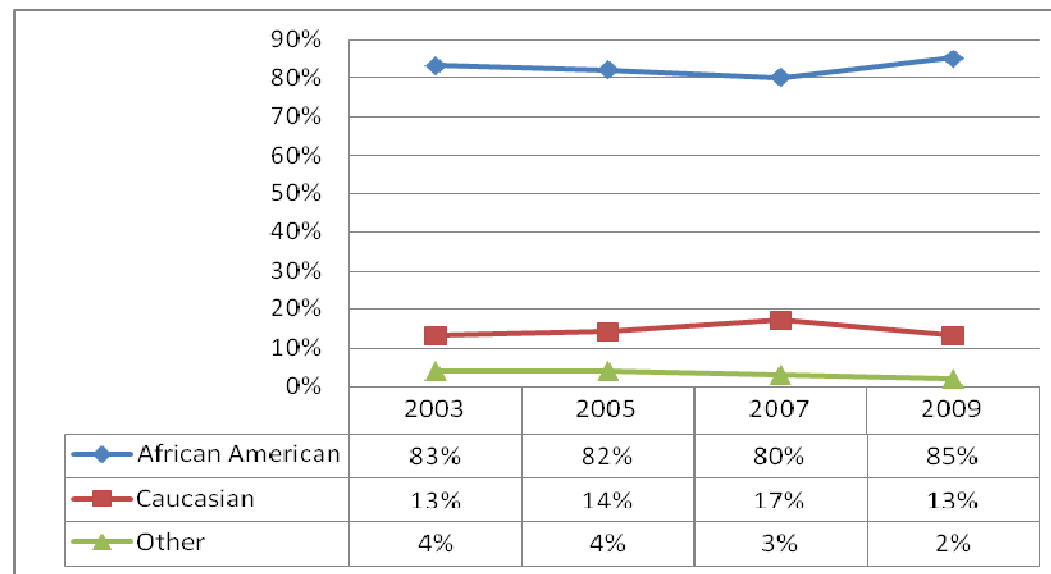
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Table 4 Demographic Data for the Sheltered Homeless Population (HMIS data base) January 22, 2009			
Race	African American/Black	1414	85%
	European American/White	216	13%
	Other	2	0%
	Multi-racial	32	2%
Age category	Adult	1285	77%
	Child	379	23%
Gender	Male	981	59%
	Female	683	41%
Marital Status	Married	43	3%
	Separated/Divorced	205	16%
	Single	936	74%
	Widowed	20	2%
	Not SPECIFIED	58	5%
Educational Attainment	Less than 9 th Grade	187	11%
	9-12 th Grade Non HS grad	306	18%
	High School grad	414	25%
	Some college	34	2%
	College graduate	27	2%
	Graduate degree	5	0%
	Not SPECIFIED	691	42%
Homeless Veterans		287	17%

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B.1 Race: The racial composition of the homeless population in Baltimore is still predominantly African American (85%). However, a slight change was observed in 2007 when the European American/White homeless population increased 3% from the previous year (Figure 2).

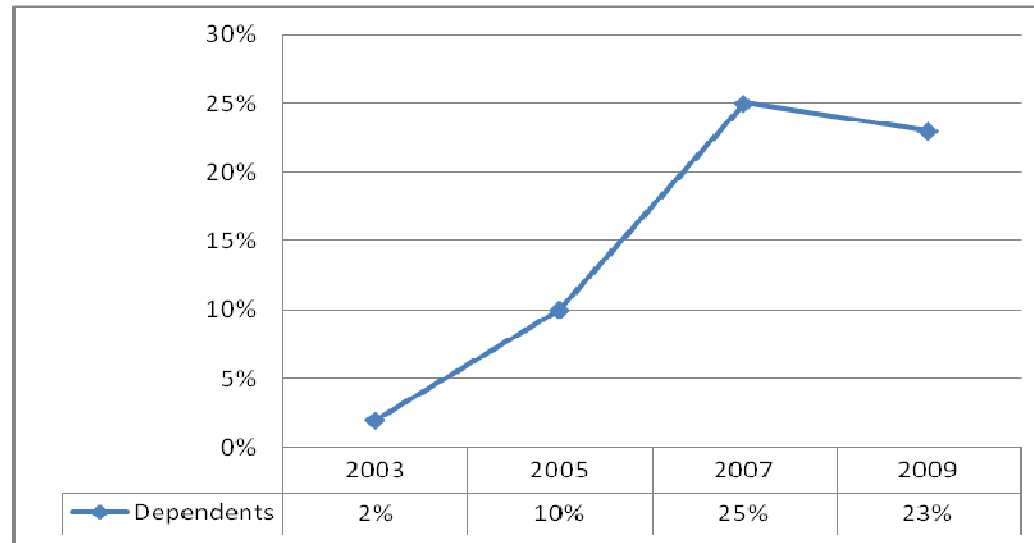
Figure 2 Racial Composition of the Homeless Population (2003-2009)



B. 2 Adult and Dependent Population⁴: The HMIS data shows that 77% of the sheltered homeless population in 2009 were adults. However, an important trend to note is the 15% increase in homeless dependents from 2005 to 2007 (Figure 3).

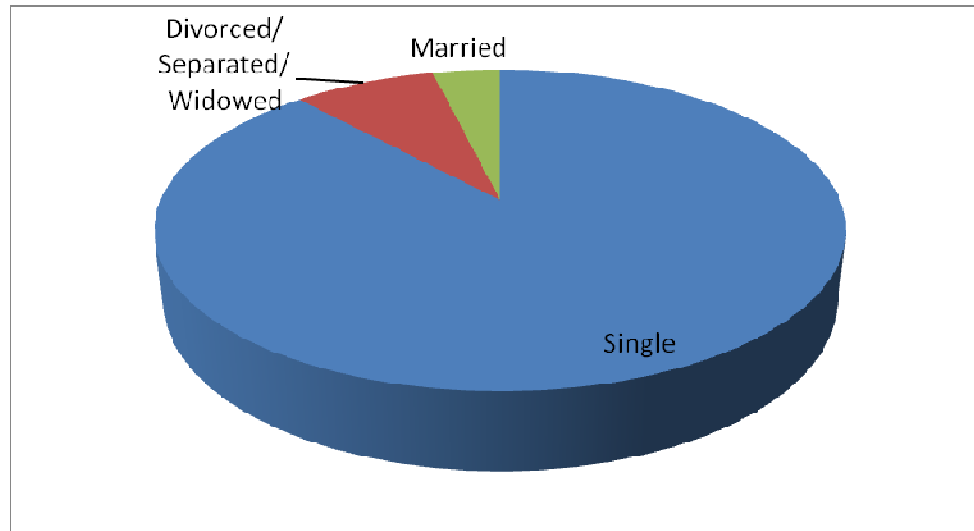
⁴ Dependents are defined as individuals 18 years old and younger.

Figure 3 Increase in Homeless Dependents (2003-2009)



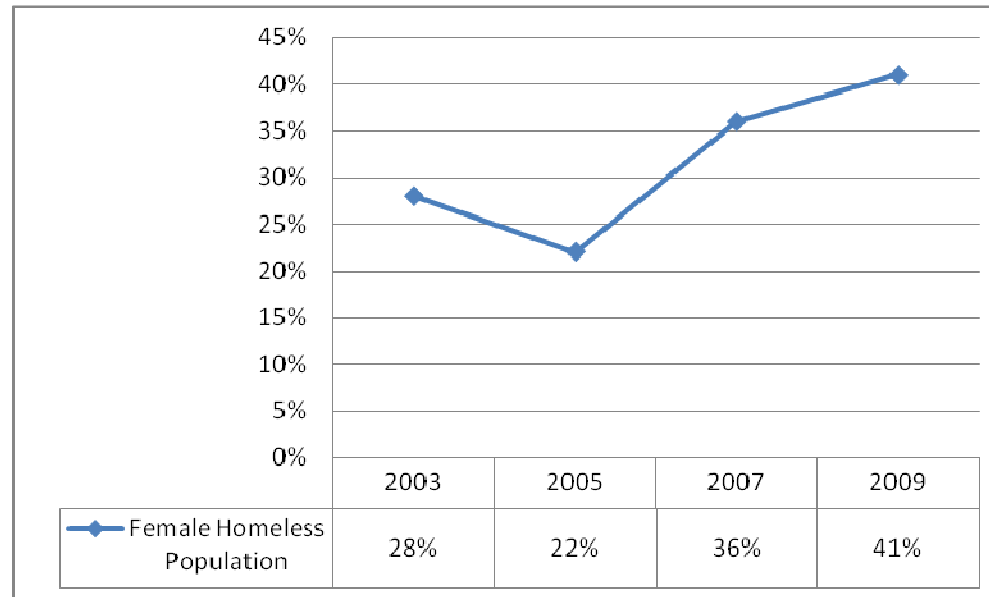
B. 3 Gender: In 2009, 41% of sheltered homeless individuals were female. Of this group, 25 (1.5%) women were pregnant. Only one of these pregnant women was married, the rest were single. Furthermore, 508 (30.5%) females had children with them when they stayed in shelters on January 22, 2009. Of this subgroup, 88% were single (Figure 4). Other people who had children with them at the shelters were 31 (1.9%) couples and 9 men (.05%).

Figure 4 Marital Status of Sheltered Women with Children (n=508)



In an analysis of past census years, the female homeless population experienced a 14% increase and 5% increase in 2005 and 2009, respectively (Figure 5).

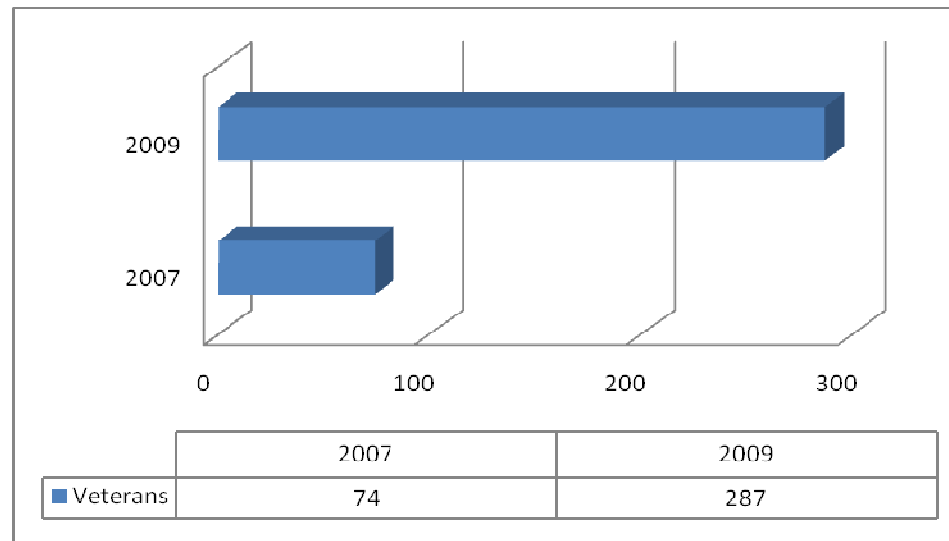
Figure 5 Increase in Female Homeless Population (2003-2009)



B. 4 Marital Status: Table 4 indicates that majority of the sheltered heads of households were single (74%). The rest of this group were either married (3%) or divorced, separated or widowed (18%).

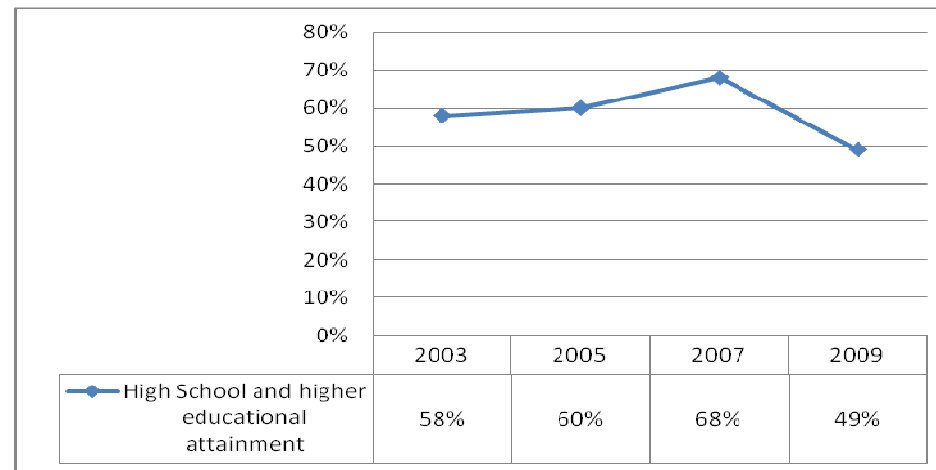
B.5 Veteran Status: Of the sheltered adults, 287(17%) individuals indicated they were veterans. This is a significant increase from the 2007 HMIS data (Figure 6). Although the 2005 Census Report identified 242 veterans, the methodology used was a personal survey rather than the HMIS tracking system, therefore, the 2005 data was not included in Figure 6.

Figure 6 Increase in Homeless Veterans (2007 and 2009)



B.6 Educational Attainment of Household Head: Approximately 30% or 493 household heads have less than a high school degree and about 414 (25%) are high school graduates. Interestingly, a significant decrease in their educational levels is shown on Figure 7.

Figure 7 High School and Higher Educational Attainment (2003-2009)



C. Income Status of Sheltered Homeless Individuals

Majority of the sheltered homeless individuals (72%) did not have regular monthly income (Table 5). Of the 28% who did, they received an average of \$746 monthly. Although only 121 (10%) of homeless individuals worked either full-time or part-time, the others who had monthly incomes receive government support in the form of food stamps, Social Security, TCA, TEMHA, and others.

The US poverty guideline is \$10,830 for individuals and \$22,050 for a family of four. In the City of Baltimore, 20.7% of the population lives below the poverty line.⁵ Specifically, 16.7% of all families live below the poverty line, and, of these

⁵ US Census 2005-07 American Community Survey.

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families, 25.4% have related dependents under 18 years old. To have adequate housing in Baltimore, an individual or family has to pay \$868 monthly rent for a one-bedroom unit or \$1,037 for a two-bedroom unit.⁶

Table 5 Income Status			
Income Status	Individuals with monthly income	461	28%
	Individuals without monthly income	1203	72%
Work status	Individuals working full time	84	7%
	Individuals working part-time	37	3%
Sources of	Food stamps	186	11%
	TANF	15	1%
	TEMHA (TDAP)	77	5%
	Veteran benefits	23	1%
	Social Security	99	6%
	TCA	86	5%
	Other	32	2%
Average Income for those with incomes	\$746.09*		
Median Income for those with incomes	\$637.00		

*This average is based on reported HMIS data. Incorrect data entries may have caused this high amount.

⁶ US Department of Housing and Urban Development. Final Fair Market Rents for Fiscal Year 2009 for the Housing Choice Voucher Program and Moderate Rehabilitation Single Room Occupancy Program.

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D. Chronic Homelessness

The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development defines a "chronically homeless" as "an unaccompanied homeless individual with a disabling condition who has either been continuously homeless for a year or more, or has had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years." Of the 1,664 sheltered individuals, 524 (31%) admitted they were chronically homeless (Figure 8). As expected, majority of the chronically homeless were single males (76%) and single females (23%) (Figure 9). When compared to the previous census reports, the extent of the 2009 chronically homeless population has significantly decreased in Baltimore City (Figure 10).

Figure 8 Extent of Chronic Homelessness

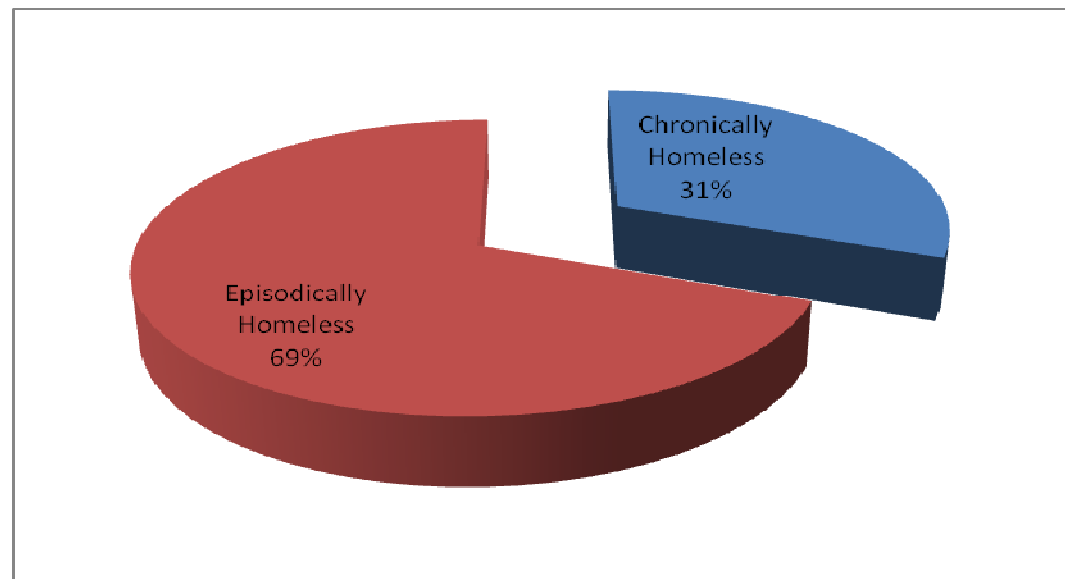


Figure 9 Gender Distribution of Chronically Homeless Population (n=524)

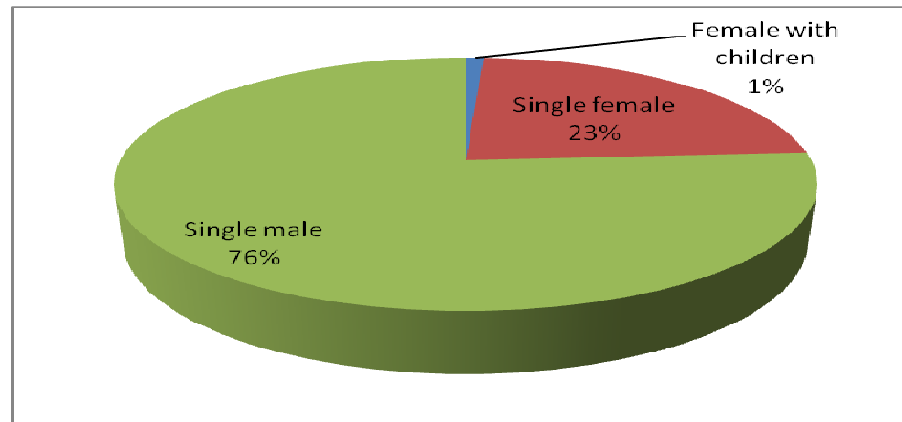
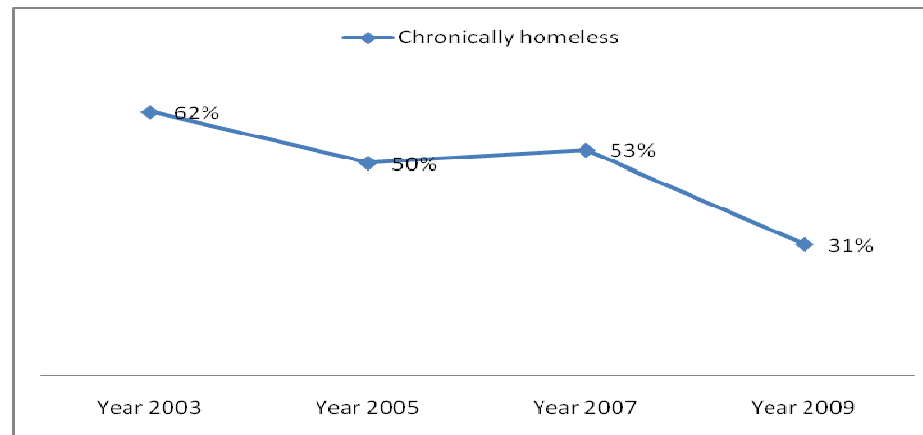


Figure 10 Chronically Homeless Population Trends (2003-2009)



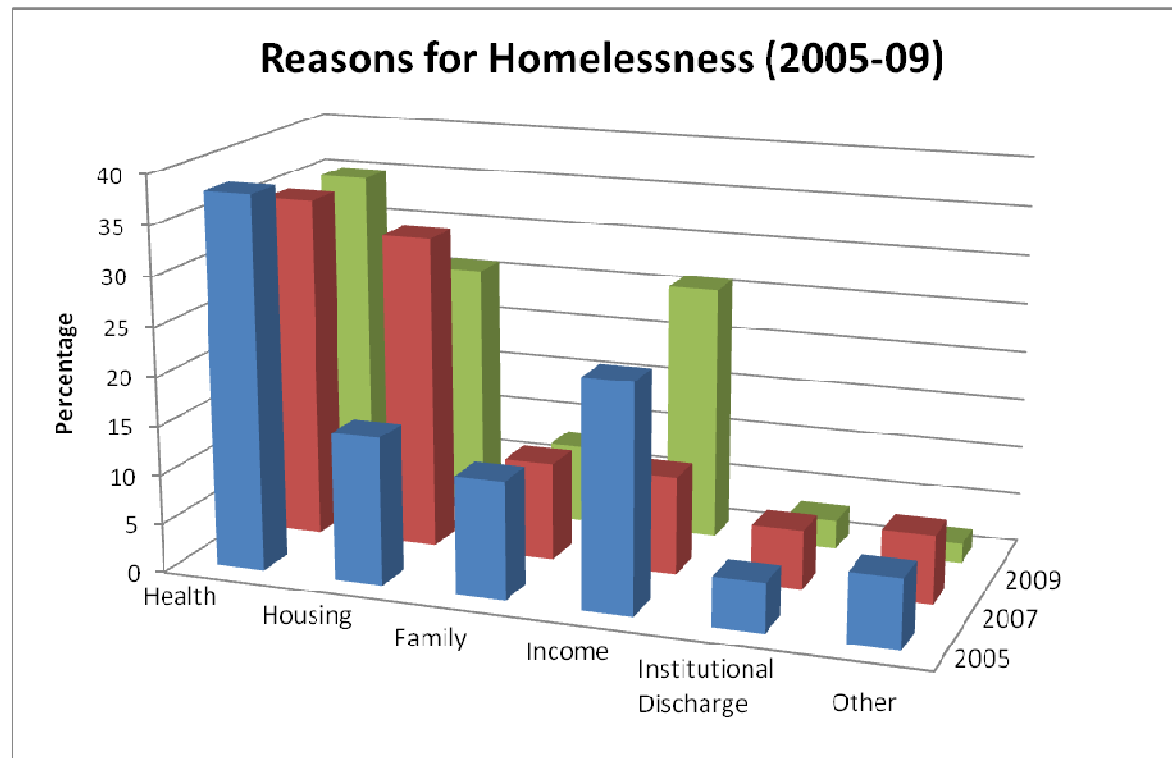
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Table 6 shows that the main reasons for homelessness are health conditions such as mental illness and substance abuse (35%), income/employment problems (26%), and housing concerns (26%). Family issues (i.e., domestic violence, end of relationships) are also factors leading to homelessness.

Table 6 Reasons for Homelessness (HMIS 2009)		
Health		
Mental Health	62	4%
Substance Abuse	522	31%
Housing-related	434	26%
Family Issues	127	8%
Income/Employment	438	26%
Institutional Release	50	3%
Other	31	2%

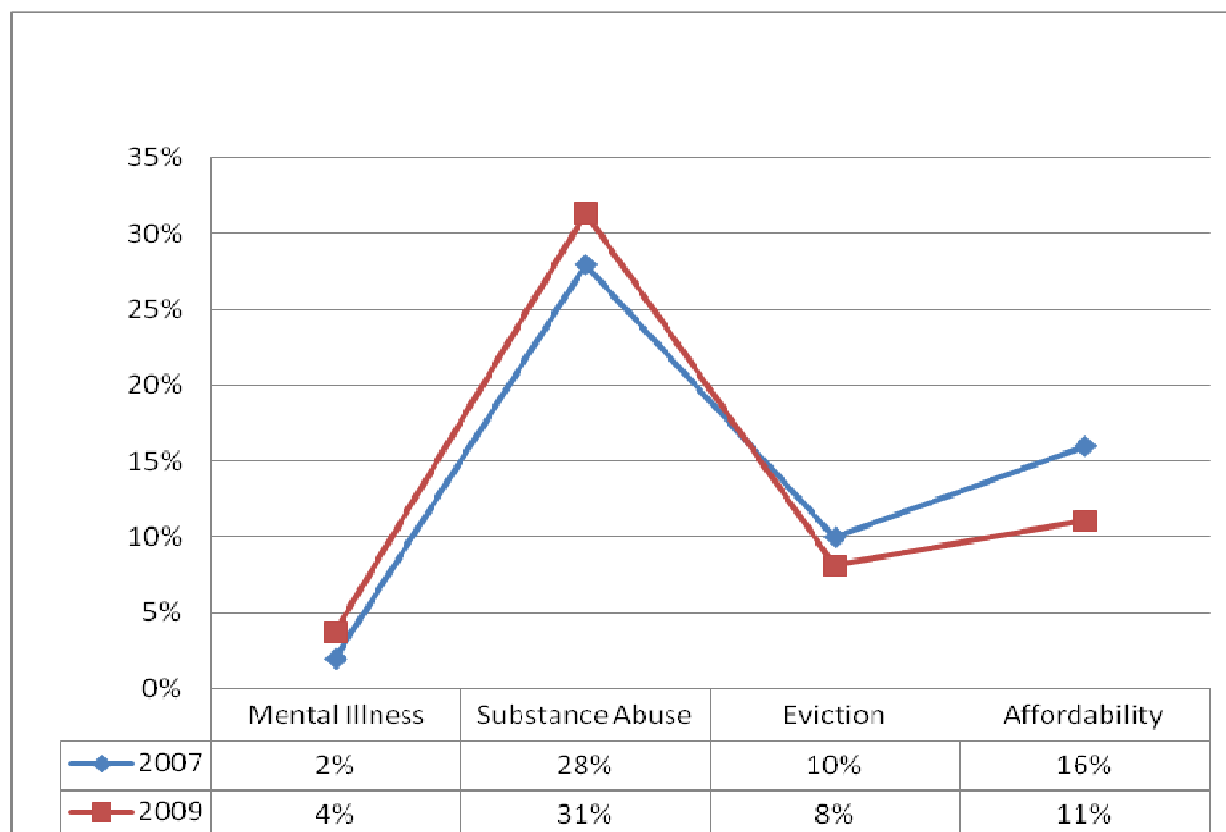
From 2005 to 2009, fluctuations in reasons for homelessness were observed (Figure 11). For example, a sudden increase in housing-related reasons is evident from 2005 to 2007, and then slightly decreases two years later in 2009. Family conflict seems to taper down through the years. Notably, income shifts appear to be stronger in 2007.

Figure 11 Comparison of Reasons for Homelessness (2005-09)



Furthermore, in comparing the 2007 and 2009 census results, Figure 12 indicates slight increases in mental illness (from 2% in 2007 to 4% in 2009) and substance abuse (from 28% in 2007 to 31% in 2009), but a decrease in eviction problems (from 10% to 8%) and lack of affordable housing (from 16% to 11%).

Figure 12 Changes in Reasons for Homelessness (2007, 2009)



V. Survey of the Unsheltered Homeless Population

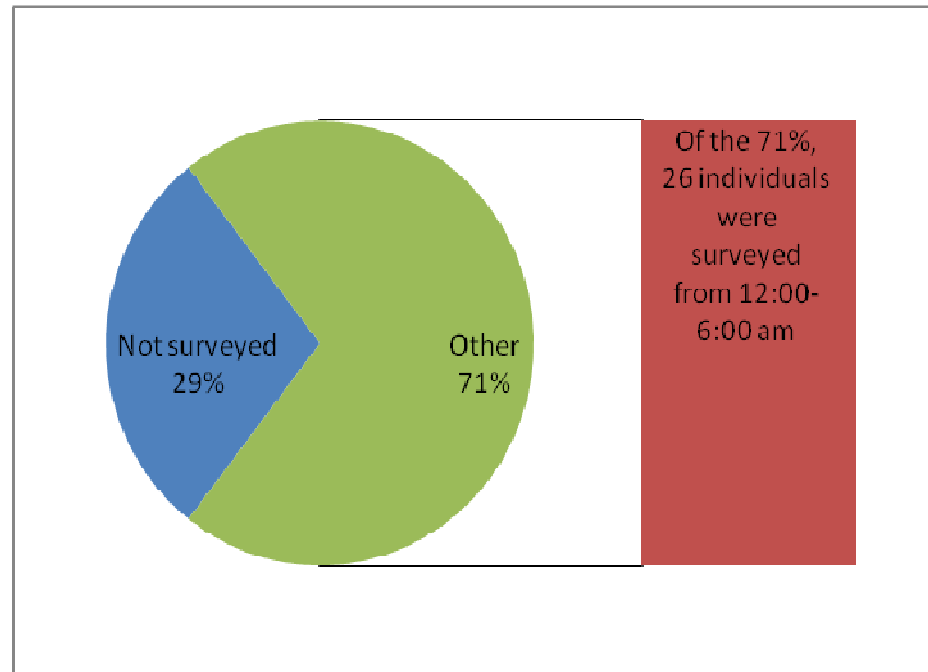
On January 22, 2009, a total of 312 individuals were counted and confirmed as having slept in places not intended for human habitation.⁷ This is believed to be an undercount of unsheltered homeless people in Baltimore City because of limitations of the 2009 street count which include the following:

- 1) The street count from 12:00 a.m. to 6:00 a.m. was targetted only in the downtown core of Baltimore City;
- 2) Homeless people who slept in abandoned housing were not included; and
- 3) Homeless people who slept in institutional buildings (i.e., hotels, etc...) were not included.

Of the counted unsheltered homeless population, 222 (71%) individuals completed a personal interview survey (Figure 13). Of this group, only 26 people were interviewed from 12:00 to 6:00 a.m. because volunteers were asked not to wake people up. However, to account for this limitation, volunteers conducted the survey in drop-in centers from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Three qualifying questions were asked: 1) Did you stay in a homeless shelter last night (evening of January 21st to the morning of January 22nd); 2) Have you already been interviewed by someone today from the Census Project?; and 3) Do you currently have a place to stay? Individuals who responded “No” to these questions were asked if they can be interviewed.

⁷ The rest of the unsheltered homeless count (337 individuals) were assumed but not confirmed to be unsheltered.

Figure 13 Percentage of Counted Unsheltered Individuals Who Responded to the Survey (n=222)



A. Demographic Information

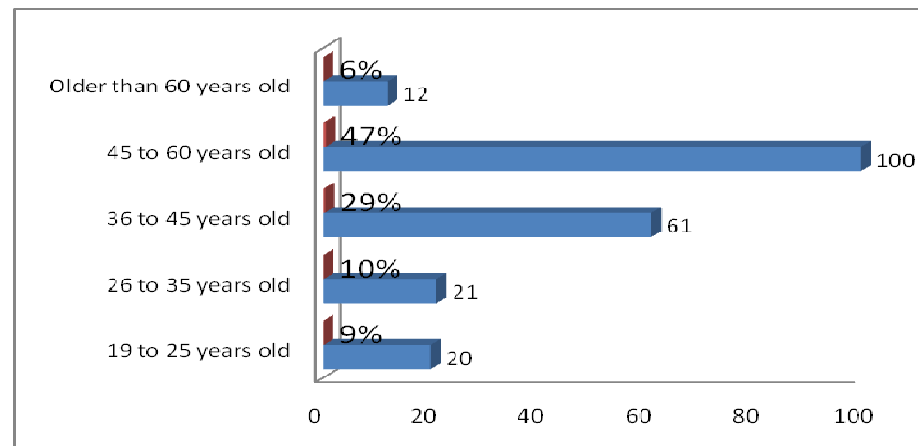
Table 7 shows that majority of the unsheltered respondents were males (70%) who are African American (75%). There were no observed unsheltered children/minors on the street. Close to half of the unsheltered homeless population were between the ages of 45 and 60 years old and about a third were between the ages of 35 and 45 years old (Figure 14). The oldest person living in the street was 87 years old and the youngest was 20 years old. Two homeless females over the age of 60 years old also lived in the street.

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Table 7 Demographic Data for the Unsheltered Homeless Population (Survey) January 22, 2009			
Race	African American/Black	163	75%
	Caucasian	32	15%
	Other	21	10%
Individuals	Adult	214	100%
	Child	0	
Gender	Male	153	70%
	Female	65	30%
Homeless Veterans		20	10%

Note: Missing responses are not included in the above values and percentages.

Figure 14 Age Categories for the Unsheltered Population



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A comparison between the sheltered and unsheltered population is presented in Table 8. There were less African-Americans among the unsheltered and more of those who classified themselves as “Other”, which includes Latino, Native Americans, Egyptian, and Italian. As expected, a higher percentage of males were unsheltered. Interestingly, a higher percentage of veterans were found in shelters than on the streets.

Table 8 Demographic Comparison Between Sheltered and Unsheltered Individuals			
		Sheltered (HMIS)	Unsheltered (Survey)
Race	African American/Black	85%	75%
	Caucasian	13%	15%
	Other	2%	10%
Individuals	Adult	77%	100%
	Child	23%	0%
Gender	Male	59%	70%
	Female	41%	30%
Homeless Veterans		17%	10%

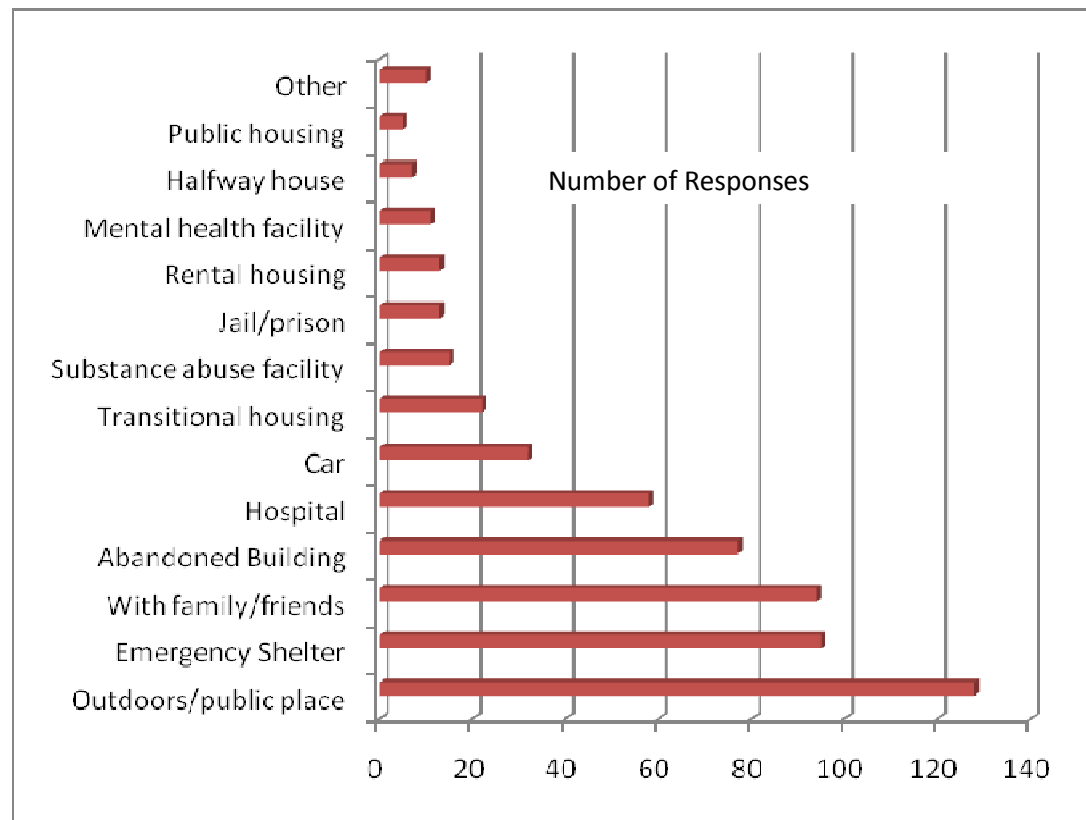
B. Housing Situation

B.1 Where Individuals Stayed in the Past 30 Days: One of the first questions in the survey was where they stayed at least one night in the last thirty days (Figure 15). A little more than half of the respondents mentioned they stayed outdoors and in public spaces (i.e., street, park, bus station, etc...). Others mentioned emergency shelters (95 individuals), with family or friends (94 individuals), and abandoned buildings (77 individuals). Places also identified

Counting Matters: Baltimore Homeless Point-In-time Census Report (2009)

included hospital emergency waiting rooms, substance abuse and mental health facilities, and in cars. One person said he rides a bus all night to keep warm.

Figure 15 Places where respondents stayed in the last thirty days



Note: Respondents gave multiple responses.

Counting Matters: Baltimore Homeless Point-In-time Census Report (2009)

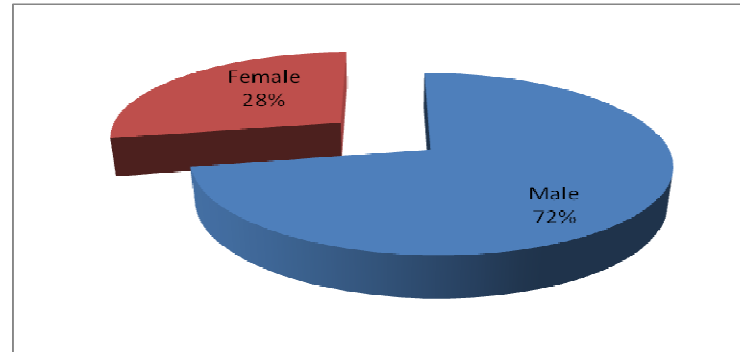
B. 2 Last permanent place to live: One fourth of the survey sample (25%) have been homeless for only a relatively short time (less than six months). Please see Table 9. Furthermore, at least one-fifth (22%) have not had a permanent place to live for six years or more.

Table 9 How long since respondents had a permanent place to live		
Less than six months	55	25%
Six months to less than a year	24	11%
One to three years	73	33%
Four to five years	21	9%
Six to ten years	38	17%
More than 10 years	11	5%

An analysis was conducted to describe this subgroup of the “new homeless”.⁸ Of the 55 individuals who claim they have been without a permanent place to live in the past six months were predominantly male (72%), African American (67%) and, on the average, was 43 years old (Figure 16 and Figure 17). Most of the respondents (96%) were renters (Figure 18) and only 2 individuals reported owning their home, which they lost.

⁸ The “new homeless” have been without a permanent place to live for less than one year.

Figure 16 Gender distribution of the “new homeless” (n=55)



Note: The “new homeless” have been without a permanent place to live for less than one year.

Figure 17 Race Distribution of the “new homeless” (n=55)

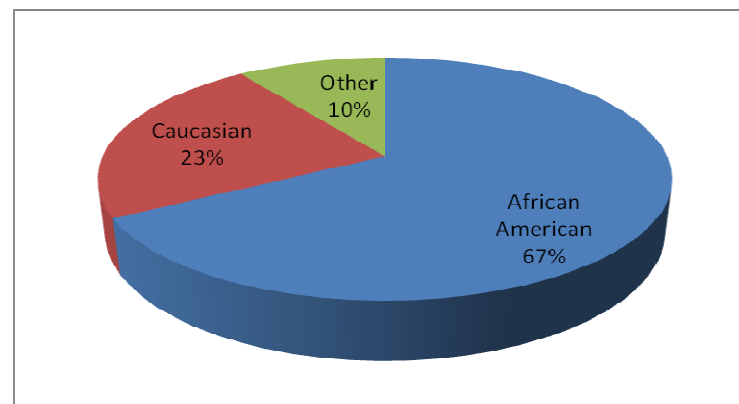
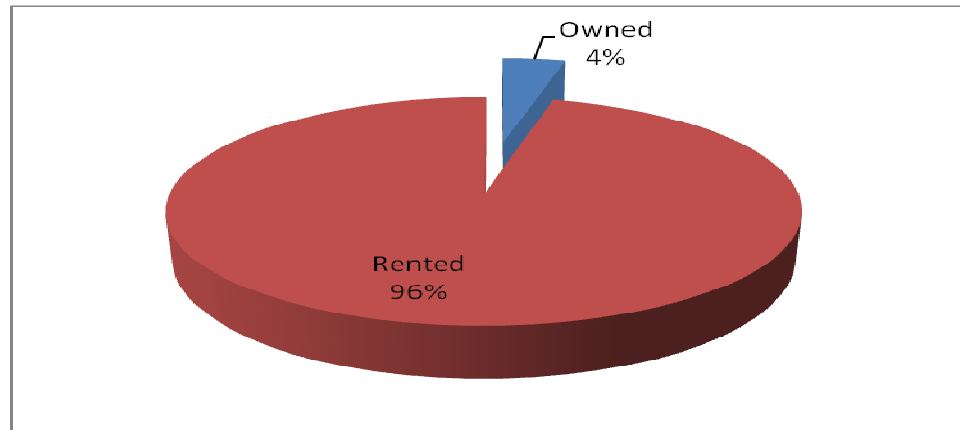


Figure 18 Homeownership pattern prior to the “new homeless” situation (n=52)



Of the 52 individuals who rented their place prior to being homeless, 40% were unable to pay rent and 29% experienced conflicts with family or friends (Table 10).

Table 10 Reasons Why Renters Left Their Last Place of Residence (n=52)

Unable to pay rent	21	40%
Conflict with family/friends	15	29%
Eviction for reasons other than inability to pay rent	7	13%
Job loss/unemployment	5	10%
Fire	3	6%
Drug raid	3	6%
Sent to prison/jail	2	4%
Hospitalization	2	4%
Landlord's property was foreclosed	1	2%

Note: Respondents gave multiple responses.

C. Health Conditions

A significant percentage (82%) of unsheltered homeless individuals claim they were in relatively good health (Figure 19). However, when asked what type of health conditions they currently experienced respondents mentioned substance abuse problems (40%), mental health illness (40%), and liver disease (22%) (Figure 20).

Figure 19 Reported Health Levels

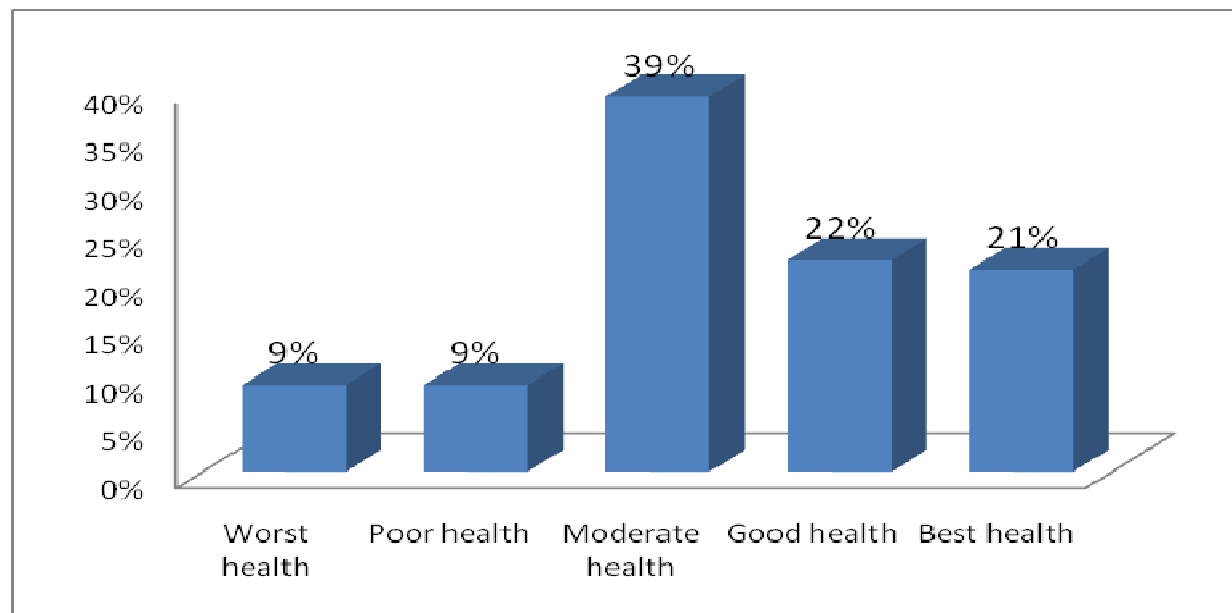
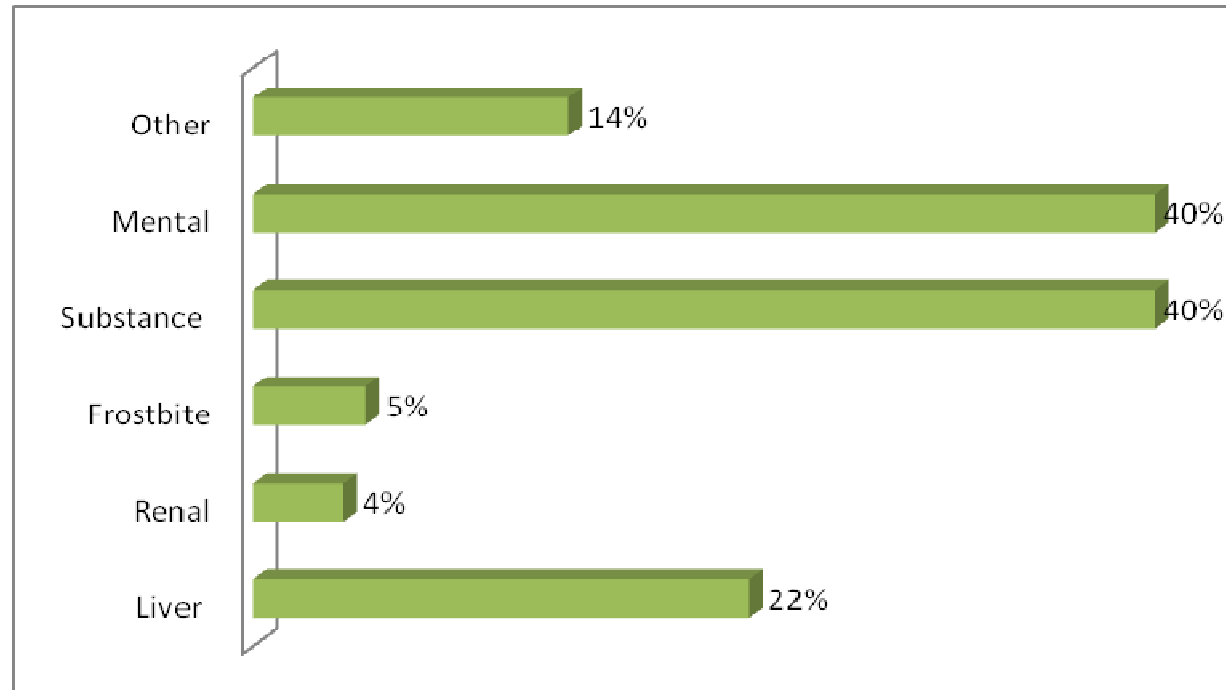


Figure 20 Types of Health Conditions



In Figure 20, chronic conditions in the OTHER category (14%) include high blood pressure/hypertension, diabetes, and cancer.

VI. Urban Spaces and the Unsheltered Homeless

The School of Architecture and Planning at Morgan State University included an important, but often neglected, component in discussions and research on homelessness ---- that is, spatial factors associated with the homeless population. Major cities, especially, are faced with challenges on how to deal with the homeless who inhabit public spaces. One reason why the problem is difficult to address is the lack of research and, thus, understanding of the relationship between outdoor settings and the homeless. The purpose of this component is to examine the various places in which unsheltered homeless individuals slept during the early morning of January 22, 2009, so as to provide insight into their behavior patterns and use of urban spaces.

Just like other people, the homeless have a human need for control over a defined physical space. Territoriality is one of the most basic concepts known in the environmental psychology field. Defined as a psychological construct that involves one's need to hold, stake, or defend a specific physical area as their own, territoriality is essential for achieving psychological well-being. It is important, therefore, to bear in mind that homeless individuals need to be associated with their "own" specific place.

To gather data on the spatial dimension of homelessness, two methods were used: 1) Survey of unsheltered individuals, which included a section on location choice; and 2) An assessment survey of 94 sites in which homeless individuals were spotted on January 22, 2009 from 12:00-6:00 a.m.

The survey of unsheltered individuals revealed that during cold weather (50 degrees or below), they look for places with the following features:

- warm spaces;
- quiet and peaceful streets;
- spaces away from wind/draft ;
- enclosed;
- abandoned structures that do not have broken windows;
- access to electricity;
- familiar, safe and well-lit;

Counting Matters: Baltimore Homeless Point-In-time Census Report (2009)

- places with no men;
- close to food source; and
- with overhead cover.

Other comments included the following:

“I do not sleep. I hang out the whole night.”

“I look for places that have no ‘No Trespassing’ signs.”

“..... hidden places, where I can’t be seen by the Downtown Partnership.”

“.... abandoned cars.”

“When I can’t get in a shelter, I go to the emergency room where it is warm, and (people) don’t turn you away.”

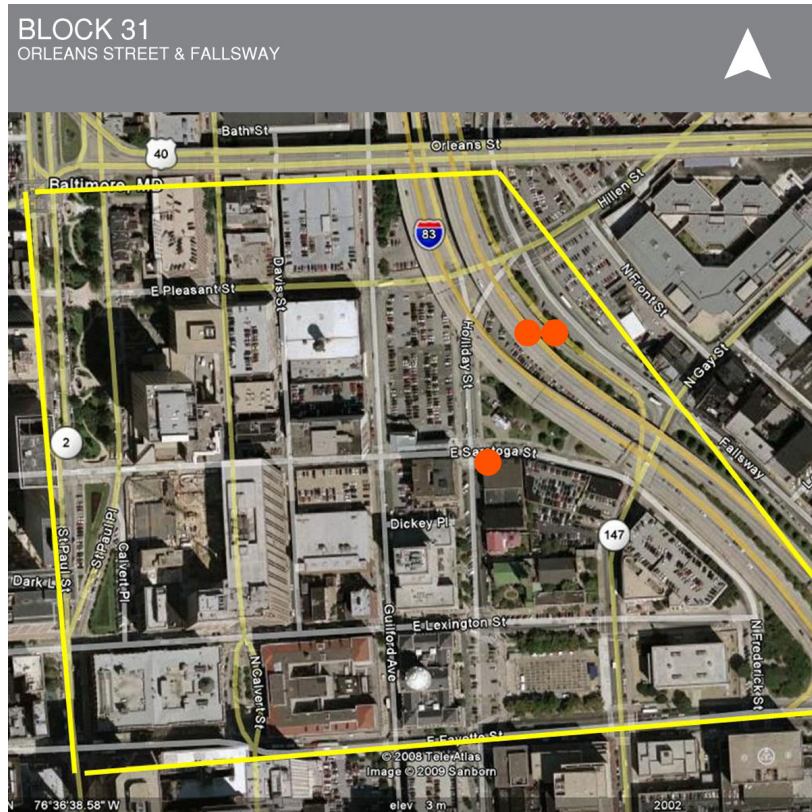
A team of architecture students from Morgan State University conducted extensive visual assessments and measurements to find patterns of location choices by unsheltered homeless individuals. These site assessments assessment reveal various heat sources and traces of behavioral patterns and lifestyles. The following photo documentation shows selected sites and their depiction of homelessness.

Counting Matters: Baltimore Homeless Point-In-time Census Report (2009)



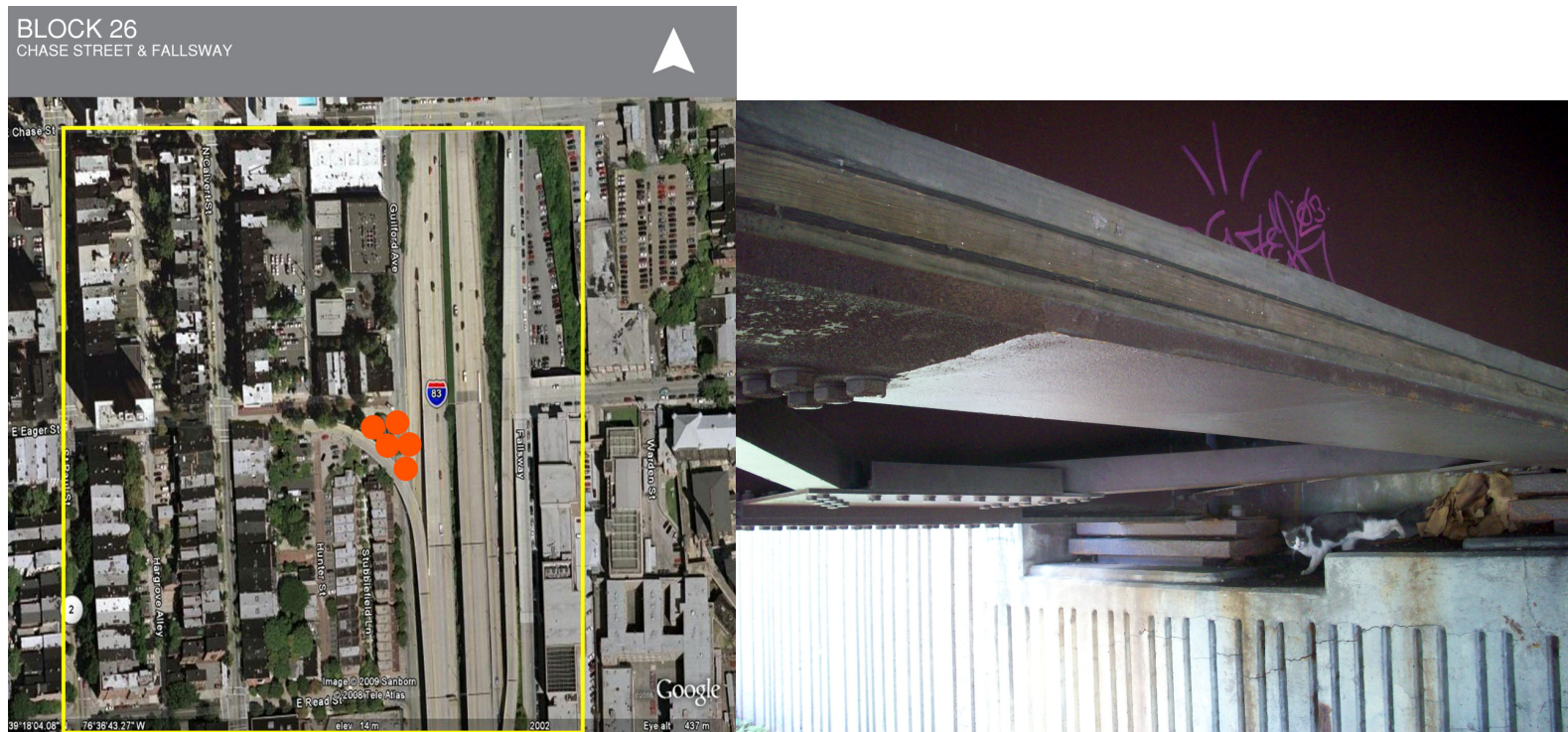
Homeless individuals find places that protect them from the wind (above) and direct sources of heat like the light bulb (left).

Counting Matters: Baltimore Homeless Point-In-time Census Report (2009)



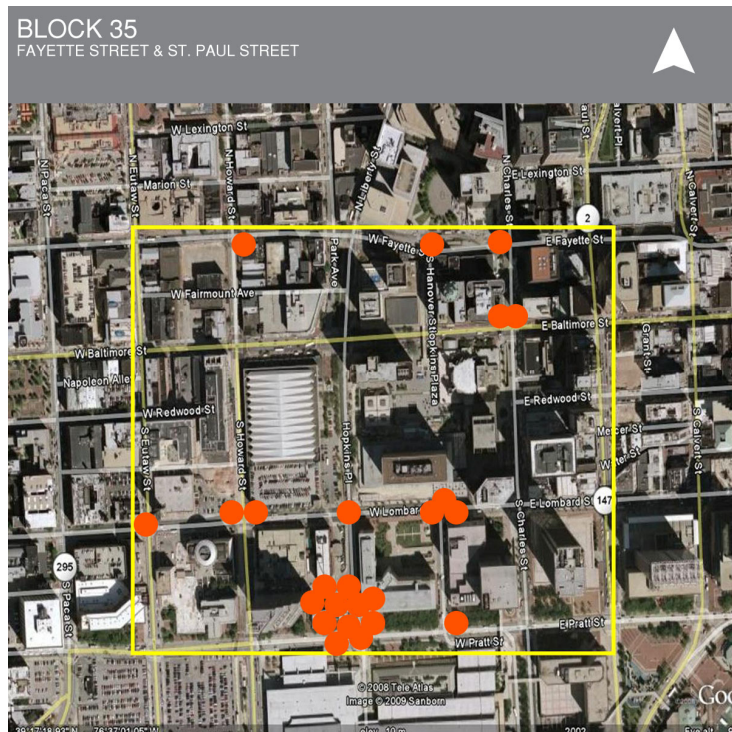
Steam grates are often used as a heat source.

Counting Matters: Baltimore Homeless Point-In-time Census Report (2009)



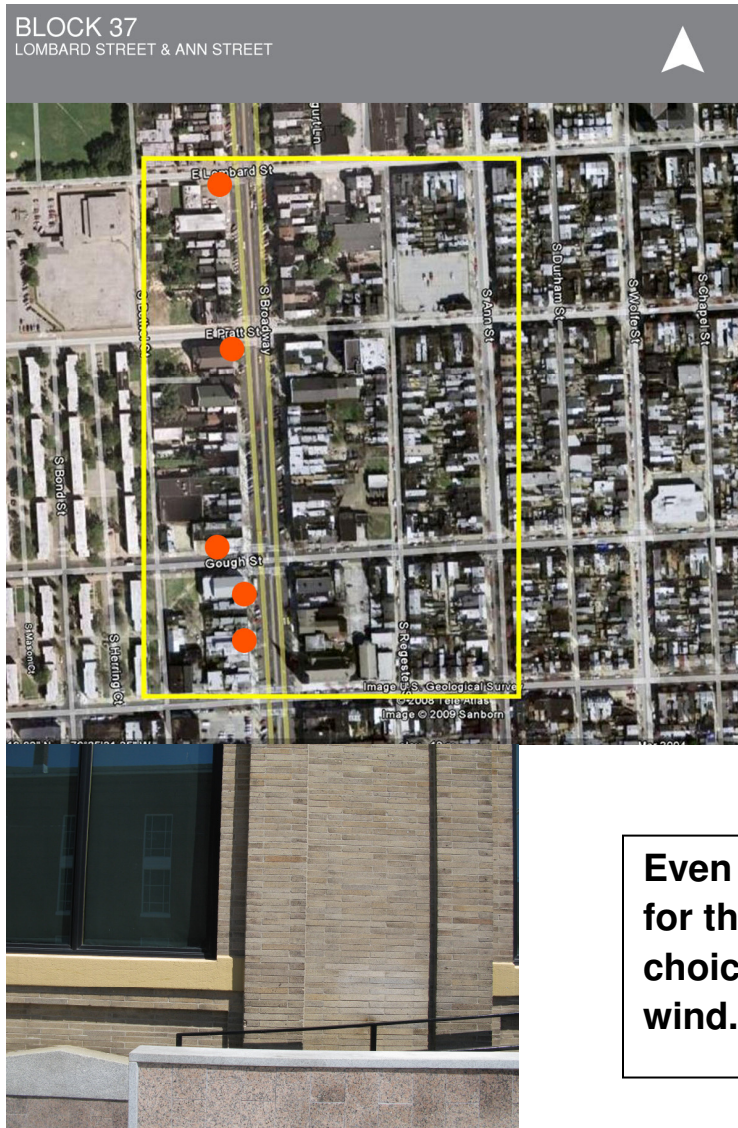
Places under the expressway are chosen for homeless habitation.

Counting Matters: Baltimore Homeless Point-In-time Census Report (2009)



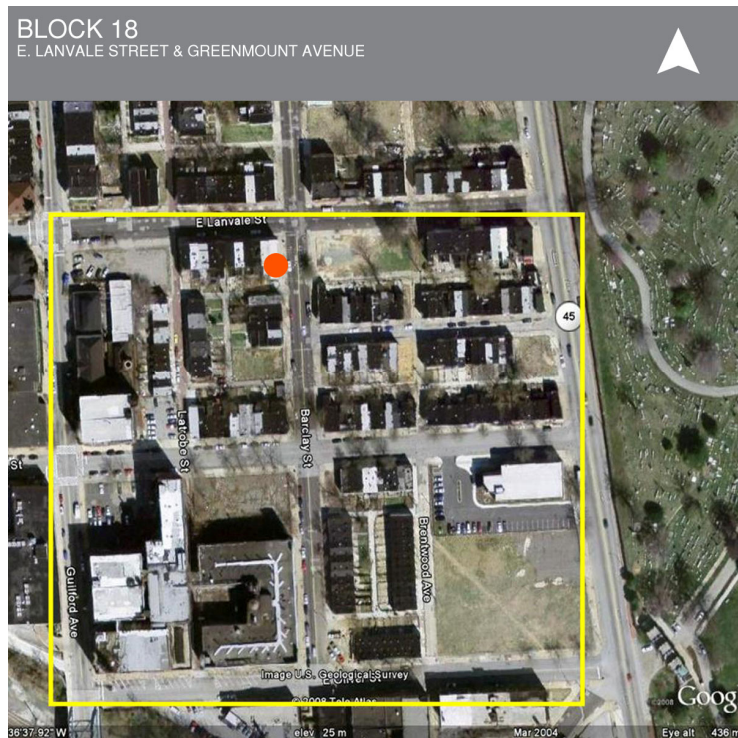
Cardboard is evidence of homeless habitation. Another type of grate attracts the homeless population.

Counting Matters: Baltimore Homeless Point-In-time Census Report (2009)



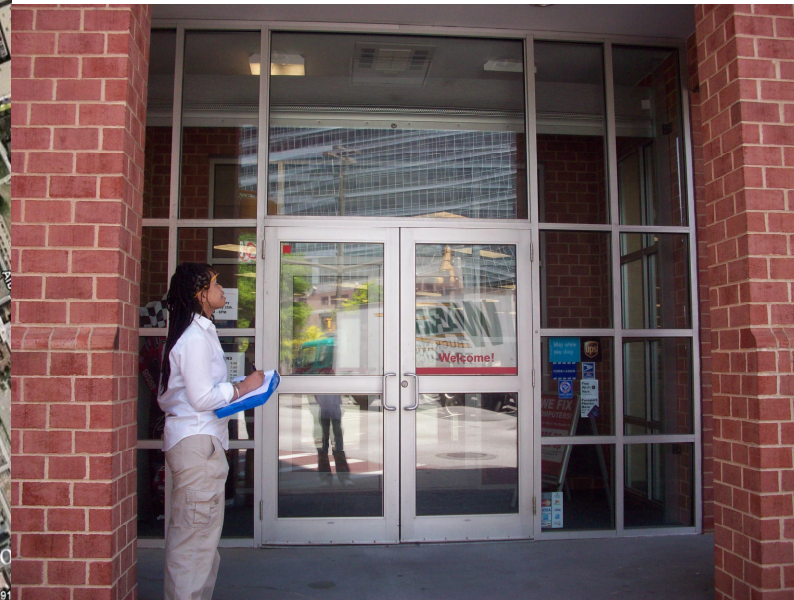
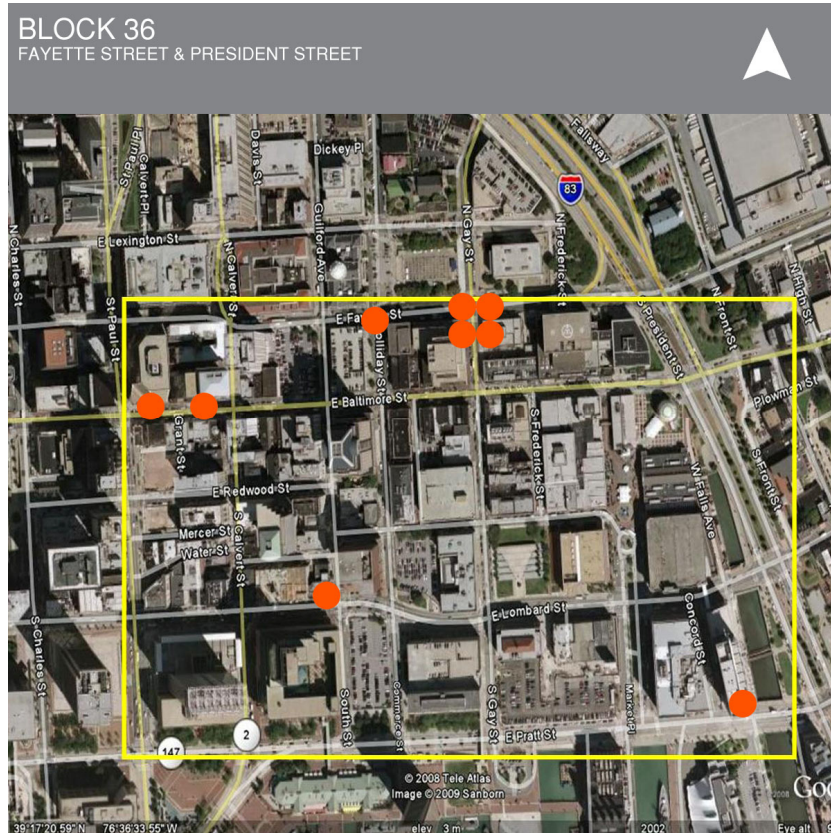
Even door cracks become a source of heat for the homeless. Ramps to buildings are choice locations because they block the wind.

Counting Matters: Baltimore Homeless Point-In-time Census Report (2009)



The site assessment method involved taking note of behavioral traces. Evidence of Illicit activities were found in this site.

Counting Matters: Baltimore Homeless Point-In-time Census Report (2009)



Heat vents on certain parts of the building can attract the homeless during the winter season.

VI. Conclusion

On January 22, 2009, there were 3,419 homeless individuals in Baltimore City. While this is the closest we can achieve to an accurate count, improvements can always be made to ensure more effective and efficient accounting of homeless statistics. We suggest the following actions for the next census project in 2011:

1. To increase the number of confirmed unsheltered individuals, the counting method used during the day in the drop-in centers should involve more volunteers to verify where they slept during the census date.
2. The boundaries for the 12:00-6:00 a.m. street count can be expanded to include more blocks.
3. With assistance from the police and fire departments, a parallel count of homeless individuals sleeping in abandoned structures, emergency rooms, hotels, and other downtown establishments should also be conducted from 12:00 – 6:00 a.m.

While Mayor Sheila Dixon has shown her commitment to end homelessness, the problem has to be addressed by the various segments of the Baltimore community. To guide the City of Baltimore in its policy decisions and funding acquisitions, continuous monitoring and research is important. We suggest the following strategies:

1. Mine the HMIS data to formulate trends and forecast figures that lead to evidence-based policy decision making;
2. Complement these quantitative studies with qualitative data gathered from focus groups, case studies, ethnographic methods, among others, to provide clarity and depth to the homelessness problem in Baltimore City; and, most importantly,
3. Translate these studies into simple, visually appealing, and easily understood materials to educate the public about the problem.

Appendix A

Service Organizations included in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

Emergency/Overnight Shelters

1	American Rescue Workers ON
2	American Rescue Workers Conv. Care
3	Aunt CC's Harbor House ES
4	BCDSS Hotel/Motel (Vouchers)
5	Christ Lutheran ES
6	Collington Square Non-Profit Con. Care
7	Collington Square Non-Profit ES
8	Heart's Place ES
9	House of Ruth ES
10	MCVET ES
11	Prisoner's Aid ES
12	Project Plase 139 ES
13	Project Plase 201 ES
14	Project Plase 2031 ES
15	Salvation Army/Booth House ES
16	SVDP- Sarah's Hope ES
17	The Baltimore 24 Hour ES

Transitional Housing Shelters

1	ACC Christopher Place
2	ACC Fresh Start THP
3	ACC My Sister's Place Lodge
4	AIRS
5	American Rescue Workers THP
6	At Jacobs Well THP
7	Cottage Avenue THP
8	Dayspring THP
9	Earl's Place THP
10	Ethel Elan Safe Haven
11	Fred Ozanam House
12	House of Ruth
12	JHR Carrington House
13	JHR VA
14	Marian House THP
15	MCVET THP
16	Patrick Allison THP
17	1814 Project Plase THP
18	Prisoner's Aid THP for Women
19	Safe Haven
20	Salvation Army SAIL
21	Seton Hill THP
22	SHG- Lanvale Inst. THP
23	South Baltimore Station
24	VOA Pratt House THP
25	YMCA THP
26	YWCA Druid THP

Appendix B

Service Organizations Not Included in the HMIS

Emergency/Overnight Shelters

1	Baltimore Rescue Mission ON
2	Helping Up Mission ON
3	Karis Home ES

Transitional Housing

1	Helping Up Spiritual Recovery
2	Helping Up Johns Hopkins Program